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Room to Learn South Sudan

FY 2014 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

(Including 4th Quarter Report)

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Prepared for: Ms. Jane Namadi, AOR

United States Agency for International Development/South Sudan

C/O American Embassy

Juba, South Sudan

Prepared by:



Winrock International

2101 Riverfront Drive

Little Rock, Arkansas 72202

The authors' views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AES	Alternative Education System
ALP	Accelerated Learning Program
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
BRIDGE	Building Responsibility for Delivery of Government Services
CAA	Community Asset Appraisal
DFID	(United Kingdom's) Department for International Development
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EiE	Education in Emergencies
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FHI 360	Family Health International
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCDS	Grants Capacity Development Specialist
GESS	Girls' Education South Sudan
GOSS	Government of South Sudan
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IMED	Improved Management of Education Delivery
INEE	Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MSI	Management Systems International
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAA	Office of Acquisition & Assistance
PEP	Pastoralist Education Program
Plan	Plan International USA
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RFA	Requests for Application
RtL	Room to Learn South Sudan project
SIM	'Subscriber Identity Module' card
SDP	School Development Plan
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SMoE	State Ministry of Education
SMS	Short message service
SSAMS	South Sudan Students Attendance Monitoring System
SSI	Safer Schools Index
SSTEP	South Sudan Teacher Education Program
UI	User Interface
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSS	Veterans Security Services Ltd.

I. ROOM TO LEARN SOUTH SUDAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Qualitative Impact

In a year fraught with turmoil, Room to Learn South Sudan (RtL) was able to address multiple challenges and position the project for successful implementation when community entry begins in Year 2. The first quarter of the year was focused on forging an integrated team led by Winrock International, with FHI360 as the major subgrantee, and Plan International USA, and Souktel as additional subgrantees. As RtL staff arrived in Juba where Winrock had an existing compound utilized by the USAID-funded RBRIDGE program, local and international staff from Winrock, FHI360, and Plan teamed up to begin the work planning process.

One of the first priorities was to introduce the program to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) at the national level and secure approvals for rapid assessment field visits to the five selected states of Jonglei, Lakes, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Unity, and Warrap. During these field visits, RtL teams met with State level MoEST officials, UN agencies, NGOs, school officials, parents, teachers, and students. The aim was to deepen the teams' understanding of the educational needs related to access, quality, and emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction. In addition, the teams gathered practical information about the geography, roads, cell phone coverage, and school conditions in both the formal and alternative education service (AES) schools. A particular area of investigation was learning more about vulnerable populations' and their barriers to good, safe education.

Following the field visits, RtL convened a workshop with national and State Ministry of Education (SMoE) officials to prioritize work plans. Winrock submitted the first work plan to USAID in November, but less than three weeks later fighting broke out in Juba, spreading rapidly to Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile States. With intense fighting, Winrock (in coordination with USAID) made a decision to keep its offices closed and evacuate international staff.

The ensuing conflict kept international staff out of the country for nearly 5 months with an ordered evacuation declared by the US government. During that time, RtL's priority was to track down all staff and maintain contact with people via phone, text message, email, or skype. A few of Winrock's dedicated South Sudanese staff managed to keep the offices fueled so as to run the generators for security purposes at night, and pump water. However, all staff were on administrative leave and many left the city for quieter locations. Once the USAID/South Sudan education team arrived in Washington, DC, RtL had regular meetings to discuss options and consider how and if the program could resume.

One of the key ideas that emerged was the recognition that the landscape had changed, and RtL's geographic approach would also need to change. Many areas became inaccessible due to the fighting and RtL watched the numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) rise. Winrock proposed convening a workshop in Washington, DC with RtL program staff in order to think about how the program could function and USAID approved travel for the team to come from South Sudan, Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, and Canada. During the workshop, RtL received the news that the project had been given clearance for its international staff to return to South Sudan and for the program to resume, albeit with some changes.

RtL took the opportunity to explore the roots of the conflict and the principles of Do No Harm vis-à-vis the educational activities RtL was planning. Following the workshop, RtL began planning a return by May 14, which was achieved. At the same time, RtL began planning for an "opportunistic national strategy" whereby the team would work in needy, accessible communities in any of the ten states. This approach was formalized with a modification of the Cooperative Agreement.

With the reopening of the office, activities resumed in earnest. RtL carried out new site visits to Eastern Equatoria, Western Bahr el Ghazal, and Central Equatoria to explore some new counties, and eventually settled on establishing the first county teams in Wau, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Magwi and Kapoeta South in Eastern Equatoria, and Yei in Central Equatoria. Plans also proceeded for expansion into additional counties in Western Equatoria, Warrap, and Northern Bahr el Ghazal for the second phase of expansion. RtL expects to work with many of the IPDs who are not in camps, as well as out-of-school children and youth and pastoralists who may not have had an opportunity to go to school.

RtL also worked on the key tools for its approach, namely the Safer Schools Index, the Community Asset Appraisal, the School Development Plan, literacy approaches, the contents of a core educational package of teacher and head teacher training and PTA capacity building, and the grants manual. Educational support to communities—whether their own demand-driven request or an aspect of the core education activities—will be provided through in-kind and other grants to school communities and NGOs able to serve those communities.

As the year ended, RtL was poised to begin working in school communities in four counties, identifying, prioritizing, and addressing the needs to improve the accessibility, quality, and safety, awaiting the full approval of the work plan and the template for the Memorandum of Understanding with SMOEs.

Quantitative Impact

RtL does not have any quantitative impacts to report for this reporting period.

Project Administration

Given the evacuation status of international staff, closure of the offices, and uncertainty of the timeline surrounding re-entry and resumption of activities, the recruitment progress for both national and international positions faced challenges and delays. Wanting to be mindful of conserving costs during the evacuation Room to Learn proceeded with the recruitment process for those vacant key-personnel positions but temporarily halted all other hiring. As many vacancies had closed in mid-December for positions with the Operations and Finance Teams, the Director of Finance and Administration continued to short-list candidates for positions and remaining in contact with the selected applicants so the hiring process could resume quickly when appropriate.

In addition, the relocation of international staff from their temporary accommodations and identification of alternate office space for the project was also paused. Once Room to Learn was authorized to resume project activities, project staff reactivated job advertisements, and the search for secure housing and office space in coordination with both short-term security advisors and the newly hired Director of Security and Operations resumed.

Modification #2 not only expanded the geographic footprint of the project, but it also address the movement project headquarters to Juba and adjusting the organogram to support the altered operational and programmatic approach to implementation. At the end of the reporting period, RtL was well on its way to being fully staffed, had relocated offices in Juba, settled international staff in new secure apartments, established its first Hub office in Wau, and opened satellite bases at the county level to facility community entry in the quarter ahead.

Subsequent Quarter's Work Plan

The next quarter RtL hopes to secure approval of the State Memorandum of Understanding template submitted to USAID in the current quarter to enable RtL to be able to begin community selection and entry. Using the County Teams and trained enumerators, RtL will enter communities and collect

baseline data while conducting the community asset appraisal, the school self-assessment, and the development or updating of School Development Plans that will form the basis for demand-driven grants to school communities in the following quarter.

Planning will begin for the next cohort of County Teams by working with USAID and MoEST to identify and vet selected states and counties. RtL will conduct rapid assessment field visits, begin the recruitment process for new staff, and start identifying potential office space. In addition, RtL will identify a school in Juba to serve as a pilot site and model for RtL activities and seek approval for its selection from the MoEST.

To advance the educational activities of RtL, the team will conduct a workshop to develop strategies for capacity development of teachers in formal, Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), and CGSs. In addition, work will begin on the Scope and Sequence of literacy materials that will be used in pastoralist settings. RtL will review existing literacy materials and will organize donated books received from SSTEP to ensure that materials given to RtL schools are grade- and content-appropriate. As one of the first stages of literacy-focused training, RtL will develop an instructional materials management trainer's guide so that teachers receiving printed materials will be able to use them effectively.

Souktel will complete connectivity through the Zain network and test and debug the mobile telephone platform. Souktel will finalize user data fields and train RtL in-country staff on the use of the system through remote and in-country demonstrations. Souktel will provide technical support to users as the RtL team starts using the system.

II. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS (QUALITATIVE IMPACT)

The first year of Room to Learn South Sudan implementation was significantly impacted by the outbreak of violence on December 15, 2013, the ensuing evacuation of international staff, and the five month hiatus in operations. Prior to the eruption of conflict, RtL had fielded most of the key personnel and had undertaken field visits to the states identified for RtL operations, namely Jonglei, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Unity, and Warrap States. Initially Upper Nile State was also targeted for RtL intervention, but based upon the apparent disinterest of the State Ministry of Education (SMoE) in Room to Learn interventions and informed by the USAID guidance, Winrock agreed to work in Lakes State instead. Members of RtL's program team, including staff from Winrock International, FHI360 and Plan International conducted field visits to the five selected states to meet with SMoE officials, members of the education cluster, schools, and NGOs as a rapid appraisal to inform program plans. After the field visits, RtL convened a workshop in Juba with SMoE representatives to identify priorities for RtL program activities. The results from this workshop informed RtL's first annual work plan submitted on November 24.

Sub-grant agreements signed with FHI 360, Plan International and Souktel. During Year 1 of the life of the program, Winrock International signed grant agreements with the subawardees. The subaward with FHI360 was signed on December 19, 2013, while Plan International signed the subaward in April 17, 2014. Souktel signed the subaward following the resumption of RtL field activities on May 19, 2014. All three organizations had operated under a Letter of Intent prior to signing their subawards.

RtL's months prior to outbreak of violence on December 15, 2013 were spent on start-up activities: building the implementation team, establishing operations, carrying out consultations with major stakeholders, and collaboratively developing a 16-month work plan.

Work Planning Workshop in DC. In February 2014, Winrock first submitted a 90-day and then a 120-day work plan to USAID that included a proposal to conduct a workshop in Winrock's Arlington, Virginia offices. Although neither plan was fully approved, USAID did approve the workshop and Winrock began making travel and other arrangements for program staff to attend the workshop in April. The purpose of the workshop was for the program staff to refine RtL's approaches and develop contingency plans for the return to South Sudan. A full-day conflict analysis session was conducted as part of the two-week workshop (see additional details under "Key Achievements") with Carrie Gruenloh, Senior Conflict Advisor with USAID. Ms. Gruenloh provided an historical overview of the conflict to the RtL team and worked with participants to discuss and analyze root causes of conflict. A result of this discussion was a draft list of pilot counties for RtL interventions based on selection criteria which was mindful of the current conflict dynamics. During the workshop, USAID provided clearance for the international staff to return to work, and this was accomplished by May 14, 2014.

USAID concurrence to expand the geographic footprint nationally. Room to Learn was conceived with a five-state footprint that would respond to educational needs in some of the least-served states. However, the conflict that erupted in December 2013 led to massive displacement and heightened security risks in areas caught in the conflict. Furthermore, in communities to which Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) fled, there was a burgeoning population including many children and youth whose educations were interrupted. With the influx of IDPs, the educational needs in these areas were escalating, while out-of-school children and youth embedded in host communities were competing with them over resources and services, turning some of these areas into flash points due to the increased tension. RtL agreed with USAID to open up the option of implementation in all ten states to enable RtL to respond to the current and future needs and opportunities. A ten-state presence increases RtL opportunities for success in payams and counties that are relatively stable. This was reflected in the modification Winrock submitted to USAID which was approved on August 19, 2014.

A full-day conflict analysis session was conducted as part of the two week April workshop with Carrie Gruenloh, Senior Conflict Advisor with USAID. Ms. Gruenloh provided an historical overview of the conflict to the RtL team and worked with participants to discuss and analyze root causes of conflict. A result of this discussion was a draft list of pilot areas for RtL interventions based on selection criteria which was mindful of the current conflict dynamics.

Year 1 Counties Selected and Field Offices Established. During the initial start-up months prior to December, USAID approved the change the main field office from Kwajok to Juba, and to establish state offices in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Jonglei, Unity, and Lakes States.

Following December 2013 violence, RtL geographic focus was changed to respond to the realities imposed by the conflict. USAID approved to expand RtL activities to cover the 10 states of South Sudan through a phased approach to geographic expansion.

The selection of counties was finalized following the rapid assessment field visits to four counties in three new states: Central Equatoria State, Eastern Equatoria State and Western Bahr el Ghazal. The findings of the visits assisted RtL in the selection of the payams where Year 1 field offices will be established. Between August and September 2014, five field offices were identified, leased and furnished in: Wau, Yei, Kapoeta South, Magwi, and Nimule. Wau is a hub office that accommodates two county teams: Wau and Bagari.

Hub Offices approved. In April, agreement was reached with USAID on establishing RtL's three hub offices. The initial selection of the hub offices was Wau, and Rumbek. The location of the third hub is yet to be determined based on the developments on the ground. The RtL work plan that was prepared in

July 2014 proposed related staffing adjustments in line with the revised geographic scope and an official budget realignment/modification supporting this structure was submitted on May 21, 2014.

RtL Fully Staffed. During the initial start-up months prior to December 2013 crisis, Winrock was able to complete hiring and deploy the three key personnel positions staffed by Winrock including RtL former Project Director John Raleigh, Director of Grants Sahar Al-Rufai, and the former Director of Community Mobilization Mary Mogga.

Following the eruption of the conflict, program activities for RtL were put on hold. In spite of this, the RtL team continued the recruitment process. The recruitment of the Christopher Kenyi, the Education Director (a key personnel position), Nurudeen Lawal, the Teacher's Development Specialist, and Brett Petzer, the former Country Security Manager (a new position that was created following the crisis) was finalized during the evacuation period, plus the finalization of the candidate for the position of Robert Schuknecht, the Director of Community Mobilization. A new Project Director candidate was identified too, but he was not approved by USAID.

Upon return to Juba and resumption of the program activities in mid May 2014, RtL recruited Erik Bentzen, the Project Director; Mathew Massai, the Emergency Preparedness Manager, and more than 40 local staff members in Juba and field offices.

Recruitment of the Development, Outreach and Communications Coordinator, a newly added position to RtL organogram, is ongoing. The position is expected to be filled before the end of 2014.

Orientation of the new RtL staff completed. RtL conducted a 5-day orientation workshop to the new staff on the September 8–12, prior to staff deployment to the field offices. More than 40 new staff members were brought to Juba for the orientation. Please refer to "Attachments to FY14 Annual Progress Report,"pg. 163 for a list of the presentation and the orientation agenda.

Relations with MoEST. The RTL team organized meetings with a number of Directorates and Departments to introduce the RTL project and its activities. The team met with the Directorate of Alternative Education System, the Departments of Curriculum Development and National Languages and the Directorate of Gender and Social Change. The MoEST Office of the Development Partners organized these meetings at the team's request. Per RtL's request, the undersecretary of MoEST wrote a letter to the state ministers of education in the original states to introduce the program.

In November 2013, RtL convened a **1- month work plan workshop** in Juba and invited state representatives to participate directly in the planning process. Through these interactions, RtL identified linkages to strategic education plans (at the central and state level) and established relationships with key education actors and stakeholders.

In July 2014, the **first Joint Steering Committee** was conducted. The main objective of the Joint Steering Committee is to serve as an Advisory body to the Task force committees, donor-funded education activities, and other related bodies. This will help to ensure coordination and reduce overlaps on the government and major donors' funded activities which include GPE, GESS, Room to Learn and IMED in South Sudan. Within the contractual obligations of the GPE, Room to Learn, GESS, and IMED, the Steering Committee will ensure that all interventions fall within MoEST priorities and are in line with the General Education Strategic Plan, 2012-2017. RtL is a non voting member.

Under the Joint Steering Committee, each project (GPE, GESS, Room to Learn, and IMED) will have a working level Task Force committed to oversight of the day to day implementation of activities as

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defined by the various components in the programs. A draft terms of reference were developed by the field team and submitted to Winrock for approval on the 25th of September. The terms of reference will then be submitted to USAID for approval.

More details on the relation with MoEST will be found in the section titled: *PROGRESS ON LINKS WITH GOSS AGENCIES*

Relations with other education programs. Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS). GESS provides capitation grants to schools based on increased attendance and cash transfers to girls in higher primary grades. RtL plans to assist schools that did not qualify for a capitation grant so they may meet the eligibility criteria. Both projects have agreed to use the same School Development Plan templates in order to reduce confusion and increase familiarity with a standard tool. RtL participates as observers in GESS technical committee monthly meetings as well as the GESS workshops.

Improved Management of Education Delivery (IMED) program. IMED seeks to facilitate capacity building in the country's national Ministry of General Education and Instruction, as well as education ministries in the Greater Bahr el Ghazal region including Lakes, Warrap, Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal states. The project will be implemented in cooperation with the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), with up to eight non-governmental organizations in the four named state earmarked to benefit from funding. RtL participated in the review of the school governance policy prepared by IMED. It also participates with IMED in the school governance working group.

RtL, GESS, IMED (and GPE, see the section titled: *PROGRESS ON LINKS TO OTHER USAID PROGRAMS*) have committed to share, use, and standardize (when and where possible) common tools, coordinate closely on monitoring and evaluation, and explore a common education communications strategy.

Grants Manual approval. The large grants portfolio, coupled with the diversity of the activities to be implemented under the program and the types of recipients, requires a flexible approach that allows competitive and non-competitive grants, and that accommodates small in-kind community grants as well as large cash grants to national and international NGOs to deliver education services. All of the above led to a decision to develop the RtL Grants Manual. The Manual details the process of preparing, awarding and managing the different types of the grants that will be awarded under the program, and sets dollar thresholds for the different phases of the program. The Grants Manual was approved by Winrock on September 2, 2014.

NGOs Database. The complex nature of RtL and the different services it provides in terms of both community and education grants, has led to the need to identify potential partner NGOs (both local and international), in the different locations where RtL activities will be implemented; NGOs who have a proven record of experience in the delivery of education services, or working with different types of RtL recipients. A questionnaire was prepared and announced on Gurtong three times: one time in 2013 to identify NGOs in the original five states of RtL, and then twice in 2014 to cover the rest of the country.

More than 80 NGOs responded to the questionnaire. RtL developed a database of all the NGOs. It can be sorted by theme or by geographic focus.

The database will assist RtL in several aspects:

- inviting relevant organizations to submit grant applications, thus limiting competition to those with the required level of experience;

- fostering better coordination with other organizations working in the same geographic areas to avoid duplicating services or reinventing the wheel.

Knowledge of other players on the ground helped the program logistically in terms of sharing space in the counties where RtL will operate.

RtL Work Plan. Shortly after resumption of activities, RtL field team, started with the preparation of a 7-month work plan that covered RtL activities from June to the end of 2014. Martha Saldinger, the Program Manager from Winrock Home office, visited Juba in June 2014 to assist the team in the preparation of the work plan. The early discussions of the work plan led to the realization that more expertise is needed to guide the activities with pastoralist communities.

RtL Presentation. On July 1, 2014, RtL conducted a one-day workshop to present the work plan to the Ministry, the different donors and education partners.

The work plan was submitted to USAID for approval on July 11, 2014. USAID responded with questions and recommendations. An updated work plan was submitted on July 28, 2014. On August 14, 2014 USAID provided a partial approval of the work plan: All activities that were not related to the Community Asset Appraisal and the Safer School Index were approved. The full approval was subject to submission of the CAA and SSI to USAID for review and approval.

RtL Program Manager, Martha Saldinger and Winrock Program Officer for Monitoring & Evaluation Carolyn O'Donnell, conducted a presentation to USAID education team in Juba and Washington, DC. The Washington, DC presentation was also attended by Nina Papadopoulos and Christine Beggs who was conferenced in. USAID considered the presented version an excellent school community self-appraisal tool. USAID provided feedback and recommendations. The following week Martha Saldinger, Carolyn O'Donnell, Nina Papadopoulos and Christine Beggs met at Winrock to review an updated version of the tool and to seek further input. Another tool was prepared and submitted to USAID for approval. It is expected that the tools will be approved by early October 2014, along with the full work plan. This will enable the field teams to proceed with the community entry process and the baseline assessment.

Staff orientation. By September 5, 2014, RtL completed the recruitment of all field teams as well as filling the remaining Juba positions. All of the new members were brought to Juba for a five-day orientation workshop from the 8th to the 12th of September 2014. The presentation covered the programmatic, administrative, financial, operational, and security aspects of the program. Furthermore, a three-hour orientation session was dedicated to conflict sensitivity and the Do No Harm principles.

USAID Operational framework presentation. RtL participated in the presentation given by USAID on the new Operational Framework in South Sudan on the 25th of August 2014 in MSI- Juba office. The presentation session was chaired by USAID Mission Director, and attended by a number of USAID representatives: the Deputy Mission Director, Contracts Officer, Conflict Advisor, the new RSO, the legal counsellor, and the USAID's education team. The presentation was attended by representatives from UNICEF, in addition to a number of USAID contractors including MSI, CRS, AECOM, and Deloitte.

The briefings stressed the need to streamline the approval process, due to the limited number of embassy staff in Juba. The embassy's work is restricted to emergency services. Visas are issued in Nairobi following an online application.

A number of USAID team members presented the Operational Framework. They emphasized that it is a guidepost that intends to measure progress. It is not a strategy. It represents a shift from the state building to focus on recovery, community work and conflict sensitivity. Through measuring progress on the transitional objectives, the framework aims to contribute to building the foundation for a more stable and socially cohesive South Sudan.

Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) is a concept that is relatively new. It is related, among other things, to monitoring and evaluation. It intends to use the different projects' M&E plans and PMPs to feed into the Country Development and Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). Under the CLA, critical assumptions and the theory of change are reflected on a broader contextual approach. Presenters emphasized the need for quarterly reports, weekly meetings with AORs, and site visits to address the country's context.

The Conflict Advisor indicated that USAID is working with DfID on a common framework. A one-day training on conflict sensitivity was scheduled for September 30, and repeated on October 1 and 2. USAID is also working on a pilot conflict screening tool, a questionnaire, the answers for which will help projects in determining the level of conflict sensitivity throughout the different phases of their project cycle. She also announced that USAID is working with other donors to establish a conflict resource center.

Meetings with USAID conflict advisors. RtL conducted two meetings with USAID conflict advisors in Juba. On August 13, 2014, the RtL team met with Kristin Joplin, USAID Conflict Advisor in South Sudan and the RtL AOR. The meeting aimed to ensure that the selection of the geographic areas of intervention, the number of RtL county teams and county offices in the six-month work plan took into consideration the "Do No Harm" approach. The RtL staff explained the reasons behind having two county teams working in Magwi County (one each in Magwi Payam and Nimule Payam). Conflict-related reasons include the presence of IDPs, political manipulation that can ignite disputes between communities, grievances, competition over resources, the ability to work with local authorities, community buy-in, and the general objective that RtL's work should provide equitable, non-biased services. Other reasons that are less related to the conflict are the county teams' case load (30-35 learning spaces per county team), distance and access, and the relative stability of the areas that will enable RtL to work. The RtL team explained the vision of bringing communities together rather than separating them. This includes bringing RtL county teams together for one orientation on the Do No Harm and conflict sensitivity principles and team building sessions, bringing together participants from the different payams and counties for training activities such as PTA and emergency preparedness. It will also be reflected in the co-curricular activities such as sports, exchange visits for PTAs, etc. The participants emphasized the need for information sharing among the different USAID projects, to assist in identifying more collaboration opportunities between the projects.

On September 23, members of the RtL team had the chance to meet Carrie Gruenloh, USAID Senior Conflict Specialist, while she was on a short visit to Juba. The USAID RtL AOR and Ms. Gruenloh came to the RtL office to have a follow-up discussion about the recommendations from the Conflict Analysis session that was conducted during the two-week workshop in Washington, DC in April 2014. The team updated Ms. Gruenloh on the selection process for the counties to be reached and the offices RtL was establishing.

PTA Resource Book and a corresponding Facilitator's Guide. In alignment with the draft School Governance policy document a PTA Resource Book for RtL has been drafted. This draft was internally reviewed by the gender and social inclusion, and emergency preparedness staff. Suggestions for

improvement are being incorporated before a wider circulation for comments and finalization. The contents of the Resource Book include:

- The roles and responsibilities of the PTA and SMC, which are discussed in Section One.
- Community Participation in Education: covering the role of PTAs in mobilizing the community to support education; gender awareness in education and Emergency Preparedness in communities are discussed in Section Two.
- The School Development planning process, including budgeting and monitoring of the School Development Plan (SDP), entering data in simple Cash Book and recording of donations in-kind to ensure that the PTA Executive accounts for resources received effectively. These are covered in Section Three.

RtL has also completed drafting a Facilitator's Guide for the delivery of PTA training material in the Resource Book. RtL has initiated discussions with the Ministry of Education on incorporating the PTA resource manual with the GESS SMC manual to produce a national manual for school development planning, promoting spread and sustainability of school planning.

PTA Training RFA. RtL prepared a Request for Applications (RFA) for identifying a suitable organization that will apply for a grant for rolling out the PTA training plan in the RtL Project. The RFA is submitted to Winrock on September 17, 2014 for approval prior to submission to USAID. Training is expected to be conducted in the first quarter of 2015.

Pastoral education research, including identifying a research organization and a literature desk review. A scope of work and advertisement was placed for technical assistance to assist with the PEP research consultancy. Forcier Consulting, a South Sudanese organization has been identified and negotiations are underway to contract the firm next quarter. The focus of the research will be on the following:

- How do the traditional pastoralist community lifestyle, culture and social organization influence group attitudes and perceptions and interactions with various types of educational systems (PEP, formal education)
- What are the specific patterns and habits of members of the pastoralist community, specifically targeting beneficiaries of education programs? How is time spent, i.e., how can educational activities be included vis-à-vis other obligations and duties? What resources are available to these individuals within the community and within the household?
- How do learners engage with PEP? What resources are available to them within the classroom and outside of the classroom? What elements of influences can be categorized promoters or detractors?
- What are the keys to success and challenges faced by teachers and facilitators? What resources are available to them? What additional resources are needed? How effective is the structure of PEP in terms of recruitment, staffing, training, continuous professional development, resource provision (learning materials and life support), remuneration and supervisory support?
- What role does traditional structures and influences play in the promotion/detraction from educational programs in general and PEP in particular? What is the role of PTAs/SMCs and other support structures? How can traditional gatekeepers of inherited practices (including parents and community leaders) become promoters and facilitators of educational programs?

▪ What are the cultural, attitudinal, geographical and other factors affecting boys' and girls' initial

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enrollment in PEP, as well as their retention, completion and transitioning to formal primary schools? What is the gender dynamics of these challenges?

The first phase of the research, a literature review, to deepen the team's insights into successful elements of pastoral education, has been conducted. The literature review identifies lessons learned regarding methodological approaches for language of instruction, instructional structures, gender, school feeding, use of technology, community support and open and distance learning options. Findings of the desk review as well as the fieldwork will be combined to identify successful elements of pastoral education to be targeted and strengthened.

Mango Tree scope of work and contract. The Mango Tree SoW has been finalized. Key deliverables include:

- Draft scope and sequence, literacy competencies and list of teaching and learning materials for Level 1 and Level 2 PEP AES learners.
- A report highlighting resolutions, opportunities for integration and adaptation of literacy materials and UWEZO tests to classroom environments, based on a review of existing South Sudan literacy materials.
- Final draft of literacy assessment and RtL baseline survey tool section on literacy.
- Final report that provides list of final recommendations for literacy materials, literacy assessment tools, scope and sequence, and guidance on targets for PEP learners, literacy advisors and master trainers.

Exploring UWEZO model. UWEZO (Kiswahili for 'capacity') is a citizen-led initiative to assess children's basic literacy and numeracy skills. It helps citizens and other education stakeholders to understand how well children are learning. While on evacuation status in her home country, the RtL Materials and Curriculum Development Specialist paid a consultative visit to UWEZO Uganda to explore ways the test may be used to establish a baseline and to periodically measure the impact of PEP.

She learned that UWEZO: conducts a vast survey which requires adequate funding and time; engages different categories of qualified and experienced personnel to develop tools; collects, analyzes, and interprets data; and appropriately documents and disseminates findings to different categories of stakeholders. However, these and other related resources cannot be infused in an on-going project which had not planned for these processes originally. The UWEZO model might offer an opportunity imperative to develop or adapt a test to establish the baseline for the RtL project literacy intervention and to periodically measure its impact. With South Sudan's interest in becoming a member of the East African community, using a tool used within the region such as UWEZO would allow for a comparative literacy and numeracy data review with other East African countries.

Literacy Scan (baseline) assessment drafted. RtL is preparing a program to support existing efforts to increase reading outcomes in Pastoralist Education Program (PEP), Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), Community Girls' Schools (CGS) and in formal primary school classes 1 to 3. To streamline data collection, RtL will conduct one baseline survey, which provides needed information for all the key components of the program. The literacy scan will help to identify areas where additional support may be needed to improve reading. The questions also gather information about the target schools and school staff to learn more about conditions and practices that may affect children's reading. The combined results of the survey conducted in many schools will be used to identify areas where additional support may be needed.

Information will be gathered from teachers teaching in the target schools and learning centers, School Management Committee members, PTA and the chief beneficiaries themselves-some PEP children. Data collection points include: 1) status of the school, 2) teacher data, 3) instructional materials, 4) literacy skills development, 5) teaching and learning support equipment and materials other than books, 6) rating students' reading skills, 7) the learning environment – such as furniture, 8) school attendance while sections 9 and 10) seek views of school governing bodies and the PEP learners.

Exploring collaboration with Summer Institute of Linguistic (SIL). RtL conducted several meetings with SIL to: identify literacy materials that SIL has developed; clarify the national languages in which readers and charts have been developed, and explore how RtL and SIL could potentially collaborate to advance the use of local languages as languages of instruction in the early primary school grades (PI-P3) in South Sudan. Potential ways to use existing materials were explored. Prior to further discussions with SIL, recommendations will be made on how to integrate elements of life skills, peace education, psychosocial support and gender sensitivity into the materials before printing and distributing them.

Collaboration with ACROSS. The initial meeting with ACROSS in July 2014 focused on their ongoing effort to develop and pilot learning materials in the Dinka and Bari languages which are spoken by large numbers of pastoralists. RtL team explored ways to collaborate with ACROSS and adapt best practices (learned by ACROSS) regarding the use of the modified EGRA tool to conduct the baseline literacy assessment, and the use of digital audio players for instruction and information sharing, especially with pastoralists. SIL is expected to provide the literacy and peacebuilding material in Toposa. RtL expects to award two grants to ACROSS in the next year.

Initiated steps towards utilizing audio technologies in RtL activities. Three potential partners—ACROSS, BBC radio of the GESS project and Souktel—have been identified as potential partners for the audio technology component. RtL has drafted a strategy for the use of technology to reach RtL-supported primary schools and AES learning centers.

The Digital Audio Players (DAPS) utilized by ACROSS in the pastoralist education program will be used for delivering learning materials to children and youth (especially pastoralists) and teachers participating in in-service training. The BBC radio component of GESS and the Souktel platform will channel brief advocacy and awareness raising messages on the importance of literacy/education, girls' education, peace building /conflict mitigation and life skills.

RtL has developed over 30 messages, six of which were approved by USAID for use on the International Literacy Day celebrations in Juba. Detailed planning and development of more messages and curricula texts for learners and teachers will be developed for appropriate recording and utilization in different education components.

Pocket libraries. In South Sudan primary schools and AES learning centers, reading materials are scarce. To address this need, RtL has developed pocket libraries (nine pockets), a water-proof, dust-protected mobile library, which houses grade-appropriate English and national languages supplementary reading materials. The libraries can be hung in the classroom during the school day time and removed each evening. This mobility is particularly important in the majority of South Sudan Schools and AES learning centers which do not have secure facilities. The pocket libraries will allow teachers to establish literacy corners in their classrooms. Teachers will be trained on how to engage learners in different literacy activities, including structured Read Alouds.

Collaboration with Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. RtL team contributed to the refinement of education policies that have been in progress. The team attended and contributed to the workshops conducted by MoEST on:

- National Inclusive Education Policy
- Education Governance Policy
- Curriculum Development
- National languages workshop

RtL team also participated in the Community Schools Construction Technical Committee. The team provided feedback on the zero draft of the community schools construction report. For a copy of the report and RtL feedback, please refer to Annex V: Physical Improvements to Schools.

The RtL team participated in the Education Governance Validation Workshop, held in June 2014, to agree on and validate a unified set of guidelines of school governance, including school planning and PTA/School Management Committee (SMC) Guidelines. The guidelines have been drafted by the MoEST School Governing Bodies Working Group (headed by the Deputy Director of School Inspection and Standards), with support from GESS. Workshop participants discussed: 1) responsibilities of the school governance bodies; 2) membership and responsibilities of the school governing bodies; 3) school inspectorate and 4) oversight, funding and capacity-building of the school governing bodies.

Key issues identified included:

- A review of the current roles responsibilities of the SMCs. SMCs are mandated to implement school development planning activities and report to the PTA.
- Funding of the school governing bodies also needs to be reviewed to allow other partners to support the PTA outside of government funding streams.

The following recommendations were agreed upon:

- The School Governing Bodies Working Group would review the suggestions made during the workshop and incorporate them into the document.
- Another meeting would be held to review the revised documents to produce a final draft of the School Governance Policy for submission to the Undersecretary and the Minister for policy endorsement.

Souktel's technical platform development. During the first year of the life of the program, Souktel's key achievements were accomplished in four major phases: i) scoping activities and platform design, ii) software development and testing, iii) platform connectivity setup and testing, and iv) system demos with RtL leadership, Juba- and US-based.

In November 2013, Souktel's system design consultant Yazeed Sheqem conducted an initial scoping trip to South Sudan to lead start-up discussions on basic requirements of the mobile-phone based platform. The trip consisted of on-site meetings with RtL staff and RtL partners (Plan International, BBC Action team, Windle Trust International) as well as field visits with South Sudan mobile operators MTN, Vivacell, and Zain and a meeting with the South Sudan Minister of Telecommunications. Additionally, Souktel undertook an initial evaluation of connectivity options, specifically research and testing on local longcode/shortcode purchase, hosting, and gateway API options. The scoping activities resulted in a detailed implementation plan, which was further refined after the April 2014 Winrock-lead DC workshop.

In coordination with key RtL staff, Souktel completed full platform design in May 2014, and subsequently shared with RtL a complete overview of basic capabilities and customized features via a high-level technical specs document. Souktel and the relevant RtL staff undertook an initial review and approval of the document, with a current ongoing discussion regarding the user data fields to be included on the platform (location, sex, age, role, etc.).

In the previous year, Souktel fully developed a cloud-based platform enabling RtL to utilize mobile phone technology to reach staff and beneficiaries through a variety of interactive services including SMS- and IVR-based alerts, survey functions and data collection/display mechanisms, and on-demand libraries.

The key components of the RtL mobile platform are, A) Basic UI components, B) SMS-based ALERTS, SURVEYS, and ON-DEMAND LIBRARIES, and C) IVR/audio-based ALERTS, SURVEYS, and ON-DEMAND LIBRARIES. Development and testing progress on each of the major components is detailed below.

A) The Basic UI components are fully developed and tested, and include the following:

- Dashboard: main page with navigation to other components
- Contacts: enables RtL staff to create and manage mailing lists for different user groups; includes user data (e.g. name, location, sex, etc.) and ability to dynamically filter by user data to create new contact lists
- Data tracking/reporting panel: view live user interaction with UI and status of all incoming/outgoing messages
- Admin: create user accounts with varying levels of UI access
- Emulator: emulate (from mobile user's perspective) sample surveys/on-demand content before content goes live

B) SMS-based ALERTS, SURVEYS, and ON-DEMAND LIBRARIES are fully developed and tested.

Completion of the ALERTS (Early Warning Alerts System – EWAS) component enables RtL staff to send out SMS notifications from RtL HQ to relevant users in the database, for example community leaders (e.g. PTA, school monitoring committees, community action groups), RtL county offices, and education points of contact (headmasters and teachers). It enables community engagement messaging with content related to education, security, advocacy and raising public awareness, upcoming project activities, and basic logistical coordination/management.

Completion of the SURVEYS component allows data collection (along with basic display and analytical tools) via automated SMS-based surveys. This enables RtL staff to conduct SMS questionnaires related to M&E (e.g. teacher and student attendance monitoring, beneficiary tracking, post-training evaluations) as well as community monitoring and polling on key issues (opinion polling on educational system accountability, community engagement via SMS 'quizzes' on local governance, etc.).

Completion of the ON-DEMAND LIBRARIES component enables RtL staff and beneficiaries to access on-demand SMS content such as professional development SMS hotlines or pedagogical support via SMS libraries and quizzes.

C) IVR-based ALERTS, SURVEYS, and ON-DEMAND LIBRARIES are fully developed; testing and debugging are currently in process. All three components enable the same activities as listed above, but in this case through IVR-based (i.e. audio-based) technology where users access content via dial-tone commands (as opposed to SMS commands). The target completion of IVR testing and debugging, as well as the relevant demo/training dates, are outlined in Section IX. Subsequent Quarter's Plan.

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Souktel completed setup and testing of SMS connectivity (both one- and two-way messaging) on MTN, Vivacell and Zain, but with less stability on Zain. Following Q3-2014 discussions with RtL in-country staff and further research on alternative Zain options, Souktel pursued an alternative setup which is currently undergoing testing and debugging. Additionally, Souktel has set up cross-network IVR connectivity which is also undergoing testing/debugging.

In light of the initial challenges faced establishing stable SMS and IVR connectivity across all networks, Souktel will conduct regular connectivity tests on all networks throughout the pilot stage of implementation.

In early August 2014, Souktel conducted a full demo of the basic UI components and all SMS components (A and B above) for a team of RtL in-country staff as well as US-based RtL leadership. The system demo initiated follow up discussions on a) potential UI enhancements, b) who at RtL should have access to the UI, and who should create and manage the content, and c) customizing the user data fields.

Lessons Learned

From the start, Winrock has emphasized to its in-country partners the critical importance of functioning as one Room to Learn team, and not as separate entities with independent scopes of work. As RtL staff meet with officials, they represent the project (rather than Winrock or FHI360 or Plan), and we believe that government and other stakeholders will have a more coherent view of the project as a consequence. In addition, Winrock has found the USAID/South Sudan education team to be supportive and open to discussions and joint problem solving. Promoting the spirit of cooperation and making sure that RtL and USAID are on the same page helps tackle issues together rather than having to defend the decisions taken later.

Flexibility and a willingness to adapt to the realities of South Sudan's harsh environment are requirements to ensure that the program can move forward even when an individual is unable to work. After suffering a number of illnesses in succession, the Project Director tendered his resignation and departed on November 15, 2013. Project and home office staff observed his ill health, and members of the team pitched in to provide the needed support. Both home office program managers, Martha Saldinger and Kate Torre, extended their first stay in country and returned a second time. Between November 2013 and the end of January 2014, Ms. Lutfiyah Ahmed served as the Interim Project Director. From February to September 2014, the Director of Grants served as the field Acting Project Director in close coordination with Martha Saldinger.

Communications with other stakeholders on the ground provides collaboration opportunities and helps RtL avoid duplicating efforts. The GESS program has developed the equivalent of a School Improvement Plan that, while not in its final form, is likely to be very useful as RtL County Teams enter school communities and work with them to identify priorities for their RtL grants. During the course of many meetings, the two teams identified other opportunities of collaboration in terms of training, and project implementation.

Recognizing issues in the program design at an early stage and making the necessary changes helps avoid bigger issues, delay and waste of resources and efforts later throughout the program. One example at the early stages of the program start up back in November 2013 following the first rapid assessment trips to Warrap, NBG, Unity, Jonglei and Lakes. Although originally conceived to have a RtL headquarters in Kwajok, the cessation of direct air service from Juba to Kwajok since the submission of the proposal and Kwajok's limited economy prompted Winrock to propose a change in RtL's base of operations from Kwajok to Juba. Also, although state-level offices had not been planned for

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all states, a reevaluation of program strategy and the budget impelled Winrock to propose the establishment of state offices.

The deterioration of security conditions in South Sudan beginning in mid-December 2013 highlighted the need for Winrock to put in place more robust security policies and procedures to ensure staff safety (both international and local). Winrock's earlier decision to move to a more secure facility and to hire a dedicated security advisor (Director of Security and Operations) was only confirmed by the events in December. In addition, previous international staff housing was determined to not meet security standards and new housing was being identified following remobilization.

Also, In order to deepen Winrock's information about the unfolding security challenges, Winrock obtained approval from USAID to contract Burton Rands to conduct an initial security assessment for RtL and to provide 10 weekly security updates. The security assessment included recommendations for the needed physical improvements at the compound in Juba, as well as procedural changes that could enhance security. Winrock worked on the Project Emergency Response Plan (PERP) to revise it based on this input and Winrock's experiences during the week of December 15, 2013. Winrock also created a new position—Country Security Manager. During the quarter, Winrock was able to launch the recruitment for this position that led to the selection of a well-qualified individual with prior recent experience working in South Sudan. The Country Security Manager was scheduled to begin work on April 21, 2014.

The conflict of December 2013 imposed new realities on the ground, which the program had to adapt and respond to. This was reflected in the updated counties selection criteria to include focus on IDP congested communities as well as potential spoilers such as unemployed youth and pastoralist communities, and applying the do no harm principles throughout the design, implementation and monitoring of the program. Furthermore, the conflict and the need to implement in more relatively stable areas and host communities led to the decision to change the scope of RtL to cover the 10 states of South Sudan through a phased approach.

The eruption of conflict on December 15, 2013 put into sharp focus the reality that stability in South Sudan is very fragile, and that RtL must develop flexible implementation plans in order to respond quickly and adapt to a variety of changing circumstances on the ground, while keeping an eye on achieving the program objectives. Having a robust emergency and evacuation plan is critical to ensuring the safety of program staff and security of program assets. RtL had a strong local network that allowed the program management to get timely information and take informed decisions during the outbreak of violence in December. RtL has prioritized maintaining contact with staff (both third country nationals and South Sudanese) who left the country or, in the case of South Sudanese fled to their home villages. This has Winrock to keep the team informed of security and program developments and has enabled program work to continue.

The experience of staff has enabled RtL to overcome many of the challenges of start-up. Staff (expatriates and TCNs) with previous experience in South Sudan facilitates quick program start up and increases the chances of success for the program. Local staff who have worked for the three RtL organizations on education programs have also contributed enormously both technically and operationally.

With the closure of the office, maintaining a flow of information with staff became both more difficult and more important. For security reasons, Winrock needed to account for all staff, particularly after the sporadic violent incidents that rocked Juba. In addition, because staff members were not congregating at the office and having the opportunity to interact, morale dropped and the sense of cohesion waned.

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Periodic updates with news from USAID and exchanges of information from the field helped staff reconnect, and maintain their identity as key members of the RtL team.

The deterioration of security conditions in South Sudan beginning in mid-December 2013 highlighted the need for Winrock to put in place more robust security policies and procedures to ensure staff safety (both international and local). Winrock's earlier decision to move to a more secure facility and to hire a dedicated security advisor (Director of Security and Operations) was only confirmed by the events in December. In addition, previous international staff housing was determined to not meet security standards and new housing was being identified following remobilization.

Understanding the historical conflict dynamics is important when operating at any level in a conflict environment. However, it is particularly crucial with community based programming. Understanding how broader conflict dynamics play out at the community level is instrumental in program planning decisions. A project must take conflict mitigation measures into consideration at all levels of implementation: from operational, procurement, and recruitment concerns to geographic selection, allocation of resources, and involvement of a diverse group of stakeholders and community members..

Following the evacuation of the international staff, it became difficult to access the bank account, because none of the local staff had the signatory authority. Winrock worked with the bank to add two local staff member to the list of authorized signatories.

Throughout network connectivity setup and testing, instability of the South Sudan networks (mainly Zain and Gemtel) made it difficult to determine whether issues in sending/receiving messages were due to technical errors or overall variability of the network's connection. Souktel's focus in the next quarter is to research and pursue the best setup to achieve strong and stable network connectivity on Zain, while maintaining the current strong connection on MTN and Vivacell. Additionally, MNO procedures for purchase and registration of a SIM, in addition to answering general inquiries, took longer than expected. In future planning, Souktel will allocate at least one week for basic correspondence with the MNOs (via local Winrock staff) about SIM purchase procedures, application materials, etc. Despite increased stability, there is still a chance that relevant general practices may change throughout the duration of the project (especially due to the frequent changes in network roaming agreements), suggesting some uncertainty and potential delay in maintaining longer-term mobile connectivity.

Teaching in, and learning of national languages: There is awareness of and significant interest in using local languages, as a medium of instruction for the lower primary grades (1-3). In Yei, the team noted that while there was a significant interest in reading and writing in Dinka, only a few of the teachers had received training in the language and materials were scarce. Existing materials have been provided by ACROSS.

Limited teaching force with few trained teachers: Pressure on education services, in Nimule and Wau and to a lesser extent in Yei, has been exacerbated by the significant internally displaced populations. The teaching force, in particular trained teachers, remains limited. In all counties visited, school facilities remain overstretched with large classes and too few teachers. In Yei, the County Commissioner indicated there are now upwards of 110 pupils per class. Education officials have responded to this challenge by using volunteer teachers, who are frequently inadequately and irregularly paid, resulting in limited motivation among the "teaching force". In Wau, many of the teachers still teach in Arabic, and many schools use the Arabic pattern as language of instruction, contrary to the official policy to use English as a language of instruction. A core education intervention may focus on providing effective school leadership and classroom management.

Need for more opportunities to access education opportunities: In Yei and other locations, data indicated a need to increase access to formal and alternative education programs, such as Community Girls Schools (CGS). CGS show great promise; however, the model has not been contextualized to the South Sudan context and remains limited. For example, communities are expected to provide land for the CGS site. In communities, such as Greater Kapoeta, where traditional/cultural influences negatively impact girls' participation in education programs, this is problematic. In some locales, such as Wau, there are no CGS. Given the need for CGS expansion, the education team recommends a review on expansion of AES opportunities and contextualization of CGS to the South Sudan context.

In Kapoeta South County, 11 of the 13 primary schools were heavily under-enrolled with the remaining two schools devoid of students. The low (and lack of) enrollment was attributed to food shortages, from extended periods of drought and subsequent household withdrawal of learners from the school. Issues surrounding food security and school access need further review, including the need to increase partnership with other actors providing food or school-feeding programs (e.g., Plan International and World Food Program) to address the immediate needs.

The rapid assessment visits revealed the fact that in spite of the fact that the pupils are exposed to a variety of risks while in or out of the school compounds, schools are not prepared in cases of emergency. Schools do not consider DRR issues when preparing school improvement plans. Girls miss classes for an accumulative period of three (3) months (almost a whole academic term) per year due to lack of 'comfort kits' and this leads to their poor academic performance, which can lead to class repetition. The girls end up dropping out of school due to fear of being forced to repeat classes. There is general lack of knowledge among community members on the negative effects of harmful traditional practices on education.

Training and engaging PTA members to create awareness that changes the negative cultural attitudes to education and how this may be part of the school development planning process. Working with community leaders and PTA members to provide low-cost and more sustainable, community-based responses to droughts and famine (e.g. school gardens, community food-banks for schools, etc.) and/or linkages to food security programs, such as school-feeding programs through World Food Program.

Provision of training to school principals and lead teachers on effective school leadership and classroom management, in particular in areas experiencing high pupil-teacher ratios given the IDP influx.

In the system demos conducted in Q3-2014, RtL in-country staff noted that the survey component's SMS-commands may not be intuitive for all intended users (to include both RtL staff and beneficiaries) and should therefore be modified and/or supplemented by follow up error messages with more specific instructions. Other RtL leadership recommended modifications to the SMS commands to make the language/commands more accessible for lower literacy communities. In upcoming demos in Q4-2014, Souktel will work closely with RtL's Juba leadership to understand the specific needs of the target beneficiary community(s) and how those needs can inform system modifications/enhancements.

III. PROGRAM PROGRESS (QUANTITATIVE IMPACT)

RtL has no quantitative impacts to report for this reporting period.

IV. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

M&E Staff Recruitment. During the reporting period, five Monitoring and Evaluation staff were recruited. The Director, Monitoring and Evaluation (Francis Lokong Opio) and Database Officer (Stephen Wani) were each recruited on December 2, 2013 while the Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (Mike Emmanuel Sala) came on board on December 16, 2013. Following the conflict which started on December 15, 2013, and the subsequent closure of RtL Juba office, the three staff worked remotely from their homes in South Sudan until May 5, 2014, when the office was re-opened. The two Hub M&E Officers (Augustine Luka Nawuyo) for Greater Bahr El Ghazal States and (Dani Moses Duku) for Greater Equatoria States came on board on September 8, 2014.

PMP Development. The development of the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) started in December 2013 during the first work planning period and continued to the last quarter of year one. The PMP contains the strategies for tracking US Foreign Assistance Standard Indicators and a significant number of custom indicators. The PMP was developed in line with the new emerging USAID results framework. It also describes the special approach to conducting the baseline study and subsequent annual studies, employing a phased in approach in conjunction with community entry. In addition, the PMP outlines how RtL will conduct rolling assessments as part of monitoring and managing local-level conflicts and other adverse circumstances that may affect project implementation. The draft PMP is at its final stage of project team review, now that a general agreement has been reached concerning the definition of a key indicator to be measured by the Safer School Index. Once revised based on project team feedback, the PMP will be submitted to USAID.

Baseline Study. RtL adopted a phased approach for the baseline study which is in line with the project's phased approach to community entry. The first phase of RtL baseline data collection is planned to start in November through mid-December 2014 in conjunction with RtL's entry into school communities. Data will be collected using interviews and questionnaires from head teachers, teachers, students, and community members of PTAs of primary schools and Alternative Education System (AES) programs in communities in which RtL is involved. The data collection will involve approximately 5 days in each school community. Four data collection tools are under review for submission and approval by the South Sudan Institutional Review Board for Behavioral and Medical Research as well as FHI's Protection of Human Subjects Committee. The baseline tools will be built on "Qualtrics" software to enable the enumerators to transmit data to the central unit soon after the data is collected. In view of this, FHI 360 has acquired 20 Samsung Galaxy Tablets, which have both WiFi and 3G capabilities. This will enable the enumerators to transmit data using Zain local mobile phone internet whenever there is a signal.

Rolling Assessment. Conflict analysis is a core element of USAID programming following the new USAID results framework.¹ In view of this, RtL has developed plans and a schedule for conducting rolling assessments. Rolling assessments will involve collecting data about the contexts in communities in which RtL is currently or will soon be operating. The purpose of the rolling assessment is to determine the interplay between the RtL project and conflict or other hazardous conditions. To conduct the rolling assessment RtL will rely on information provided by county teams as well as key members of the local school communities to identify the current or potential conflict/adversity circumstances, conduct a root-cause analysis (political, economic, cultural, natural disaster, etc.), identify main actors (individuals or

¹ For example, see USAID (2012, June) *Conflict Assessment Framework, Version 2.0*. Washington, DC: USAID. Winrock International Room to Learn South Sudan FY 2014, Annual and Quarter 4 Progress Report 21

group of individuals), and determine the likely impact. RtL will use this information in making decisions on how to minimize the impact, alter or relocate activities, or evacuate staff as soon as need arises.

V. PROGRESS ON LINKS TO OTHER USAID PROGRAMS

The South Sudan Teacher Education Program (SSTEP). At the initial start up, RtL held meetings in December 2013 with SSTEP to identify lessons learned—successes and challenges—to improve the effectiveness of RtL in terms of the promotion of literacy. Following the conflict in December 2013 and the evacuation of USAID contractors' International staff, USAID decided to terminate the SSTEP program. SSTEP handed over a number of assets, including:

- 200 copies of the TOT3 handout, power point presentation and reading;
- 200 copies of Workshop 3 tutors guide;
- 10 copies of 10 days of lesson plans;
- 8 DVDs;
- English Language Literacy material

The above mentioned material will assist in jumpstarting the program's effort in terms of the development of literacy material. RtL plans to categorize the material and index it for further development and use in RtL activities.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE). During the third quarter, RtL participated in the curriculum review and national languages workshops sponsored by **GPE**. Separate meetings were conducted with the GPE team to identify areas of collaboration with RtL. While both projects work with formal primary schools, GPE works with no less than 40 PI-P8 schools. And although GPE works with out of school children, RtL has a broader scope of work in the area of informal education. In terms of literacy and numeracy, Both projects plan to incorporate literacy and numeracy into their activities and will coordinate on sharing and utilizing each other's materials to avoid replication of effort.

VI. PROGRESS ON LINKS WITH GOSS AGENCIES

In September, 2014, Winrock submitted an application to renew its registration with the Government of South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, which is required of NGOs wishing to operate in the country. The renewal was approved on September 23, 2014. Winrock also applied for registration with the Ministry of Justice. The approval is expected by early October 2014.

At the initial start-up phase, RtL staff conducted a number of meetings with representatives from the national and regional Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). On November 26, 2013, the Undersecretary of the MoEST, Mr. Deng Deng Hok Yai, wrote a letter to the state ministers of Lakes, Warrap, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Unity and Jonglei, introducing the program.

In coordination with Esther Akuma, MoEST Director of Development Partners and George Ali, Deputy Director, a number of meetings were held at the ministry in Juba with the following Directors:

- Odur Nelson, Acting Director of AES
- Moses Mading Marial, Director of National Languages
- Ben Lou Poggo, Director of Special Needs Education
- Atanasio Mamgbi, Senior Inspector of Girl's Education
- Joy Gordon, Director of Gender

During October 2013, RtL staff travelled to Warrap, Northern Bahr Al Ghazal, Unity and Jonglei to introduce the program and discuss cooperation opportunities with the state ministries of education. In December 2013, and following USAID's decision to add Lakes State to RtL geographic focus, RtL travelled to Lakes state and conducted meetings with the state minister and the directors of the different departments.

In November 2013, RtL conducted a three-day workshop to discuss the Year I work plan. Thirty Ministry of Education representatives from the national and state levels contributed to the work plan.

RtL received an invitation to attend the national curriculum stakeholders' consultative conference, convened by the Ministry of Education. The purpose of the conference was to create opportunities for education stakeholders' to review the draft South Sudan Curriculum Framework, provide information for gaps and additional suggestions for any further revisions prior to the finalization and production of the curriculum. RtL provided input on the linkages between RtL activities and the national curriculum.

RtL participates in the AES Sector Working Group meeting, which includes development of literacy materials relevant to Pastoral Education Program work planned. It also participates in the School Governance Working Group and the Gender Work Group.

In December 2013, RtL was represented at the MoEST Alternative Education Services Advisory Committee meeting. Three donor agencies (European Union, DFID, and USAID) and eight development education organizations (STROMME Foundation, NRC, Winrock/FHI360 RtL, Save the Children UK, UNESCO, Windle Trust, BRAC and Lutheran World Federation) participated in the meeting where the Director General for AES updated members on the language policy and progress made on reviewing and approval process of the literacy policy.

RtL had two meetings in Juba with the Jonglei State Minister of Education on December 11 and 13, 2013 two days prior to the eruption of conflict in Juba. The Minister provided valuable input on the education situation in the state and the priority counties.

RtL representatives continued their regular participation in the **education cluster meetings** at the MoEST during the first year of the program. In January and March, 2014 and following the evacuation of international staff and suspension of RtL activities, RtL South Sudanese staff attended the national education cluster meetings meetings at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, which focused on addressing the emergency education situation.

RtL participated in the **School Governance Validation Workshops**, held to agree on and validate a unified set of guidelines of school governance, including school planning and PTA/SMC Guidelines. The guidelines have been drafted by the MoEST School Governing Bodies Working Group (headed by the Deputy Director of School Inspection and Standards), with support from GESS. Workshop participants discussed: 1) responsibilities of the school governance bodies; 2) membership and responsibilities of the school governing bodies; 3) school inspectorate; and 4) oversight, funding and capacity-building of the school governing bodies.

Key issues identified include:

- A review of the current roles and responsibilities of the SMCs. SMCs are mandated to implement school development planning activities and report to the PTA.
- Funding of the school governing bodies also needs to be reviewed to allow other partners to support the PTA outside of government funding streams.

The following recommendations were agreed upon:

- The School Governing Bodies Working Group would review the suggestions made during the workshop and incorporate them into the document.
- Another meeting would be held to review the revised documents to produce a final draft of the School Governance Policy for submission to the Undersecretary and the Minister for policy endorsement.

During the rapid assessment field visits in May and June 2014, RtL teams briefed the state and county MoEs on program objectives as was done in the original five state rapid assessments.

RtL finalized an agreement with the Western Bahr el Ghazal SMOE to share office space.

In preparation for the RtL work plan presentation on July 1, invitations were extended to a number of MoEST officials including the Director General of General Education, Director of Planning and Budgeting, Acting Director of AES, and the Acting Director of Department of Development Partners.

In August 2014, RtL was approached by Terekeka's commissioner and a number of tribal leaders. They expressed a dire need for education services. RtL agreed to share the SOW of the county team members so that they could assist with the identification of qualified community members who could be recruited. Subject to USAID's approval and a relatively stable security situation, RtL intends to expand to Terekeka in 2015.

In collaboration with UNICEF, USAID worked with the MoEST on establishing a **Joint Steering Committee** for the four education projects: RtL, GESS, IMED and GPE. The first Joint Steering Committee meeting was conducted on July 17, 2014. The TOR of the Steering Committee was discussed and finalized. The main objective of the Joint Steering Committee is to serve as an advisory body to the task force committees, donor-funded education activities, and other related bodies. This will help to ensure coordination and reduce overlap with the government and major donors' four funded projects in South Sudan. Within the contractual bounds of the four projects, the Steering Committee will ensure that all interventions fall within MoEST priorities and are in line with the General Education Strategic Plan, 2012-2017. RtL is a non-voting member.

Under the Joint Steering Committee, each of the four projects will have a **working level Task Force** committed to oversight of the day-to-day implementation of activities as defined by the various components in the programs. A draft terms of reference were developed by the field team and submitted to Winrock for approval on the 25th of September. The terms of reference will then be submitted to USAID for approval.

Community school construction Technical Working Group (TWG): RtL participated in the Girls' Community School construction technical working groups meetings, along with MoEST, BRAC, UNICEF, USAID, and GESS. A zero draft report with recommendations was prepared. Feedback on the zero draft was provided by RtL to the TWG on August 28, 2014. The zero draft report is attached in Annex IV: Community Schools Approaches in South Sudan.

Local Services Support Education Technical Working Group. On the 19th of August, RtL participated in the meeting, along with UNICEF, GESS, IMED, etc. During the meeting, the participants reviewed the progress on the Joint Plan of Action.

In collaboration with the Gender and Social Inclusion Department, RtL supported actively the **National Girls Education Day** that was conducted in one of the schools in Juba. Please refer to Annex (Annex III: Success Stories for a briefing on the event.

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Also, RtL actively supported the celebration of **International Literacy Day**. In collaboration with UNESCO, RtL covered the cost of a billboard with the word (READ) in the nine most popular languages in South Sudan in addition to English. Also, RtL supported the development of literacy messages and covered the cost of printing them, and provided school bags to the winners of the literacy competition. Please refer to Annex (Annex III: Success Stories for a briefing on the event.

VII. PROGRESS ON USAID FORWARD

As part of the grants strategy, RtL has solicited information from nongovernmental organizations that might be interested in carrying out Room to Learn activities. National advertisements have drawn a total of 69 NGOs to submit their information for screening to Winrock's grants team. A total of 58 of the NGOs in the database are local NGOs. Inclusion in the database is the first step of working with RtL, and will be followed up by organizational capacity assessments conducted by the RtL grants team. NGOs meeting certain thresholds will be able to submit proposals in response to RtL Requests for Applications that might result in grants. As capacity of NGOs varies greatly, RtL will include capacity building measures for NGOs when RtL's assessment reveals that they have valuable services to offer but are lacking in certain systems or capacities. This capacity building can position local NGOs for a USAID forward grant in the future, depending upon their performance.

VIII. SUSTAINABILITY AND EXIT STRATEGY

While RtL staff met with a number of USAID- and other donor-funded programs to identify potential linkages and areas to leverage resources, the ongoing conflict in South Sudan requires a review of some of the proposed approaches in the current context. RtL hopes to expand partnerships with programs such as the DFID-funded GESS program which utilizes an innovative approach to remotely track school attendance and disburse performance based grants to schools. Additionally, RtL may also collaborate with ACROSS to review the modified EGRA literacy assessment tool and use it early next year to conduct the literacy baseline assessment. Also, RtL hopes to jumpstart activities in pastoralist communities through a grant to ACROSS that will focus on preparation, recording and disseminating literacy and peacebuilding material on Digital Audio Players to pastoralist communities. Given the current circumstances, RtL may collaborate with USAID funded VISTAS program to identify opportunities for quick disbursement of small grants in remote communities. Any interventions designed and implemented will need to be self-sustaining so that in the event of a crisis or prolonged emergency, schools and communities can continue to deliver essential education services without external support.

In order to lay the early groundwork in addressing sustainability of the mobile-platform, Souktel has approached all local operators to understand the technical capabilities and support they could offer in hosting RtL's mobile-based services on their network, specifically under the umbrella of CSR. Zain, both having CSR activities and having education as a focal point, seems like the best potential network for collaboration, although additional discussions with the operator are required

IX. SUBSEQUENT QUARTER'S WORK PLAN

RtL plans to start implementation of RtL activities at the community level. Below are the anticipated activities for the subsequent quarter.

- Community entry preparation work. Based on the work plan approved through December 31, 2014 and subject to approval of USAID of the template for the State Memorandum of

Understanding (MOU), county teams will proceed with the pre-community process. This includes:

- Signing the MOU with each SMoE, receiving a letter from the SMoE introducing RtL to local authorities and working with the county commissioner, county and payam education department to enter communities
- At the payam level, select the learning spaces and schools, and decide on the date of community entry and the number and list of participants and send invitations to stakeholders
- Subject to signing MOUs, enter communities:
 - Deploy technical team members to mentor county team members
 - Conduct RtL community entry process including the Community Asset Appraisal, baseline assessments, school self-appraisal and updating or creating School Development Plans; through these processes assess access, quality, and disaster risks in the school communities and their capacities to respond
 - Develop DRR plans, including school safety, and integrate them into SDPs
 - Establish School-based DRR (SBDRR) groups to be responsible for school community preparedness
 - Guide target school communities to include peace-building activities in SDPs during the community entry process
- Submit the PMP and GAP to USAID for review and approval
- Submit to USAID the RtL planned targets of Year 2015 and the subsequent years per the standard and custom indicators
- Submit to USAID for review and approval a 13-month work plan to cover the period from December 1, 2014 through December 31, 2015
- Submit to USAID for review and approval, the Scope of Work of the RtL Technical Task Force. Once the SOW is approved by USAID, proceed with the establishment of the task force
- Conduct rapid assessment trips to Terekeka County, Central Equatoria; Northern Bahr el Ghazal; Western Equatoria and Warrap
- Start the recruitment process for the new county teams
- Begin discussions with MoEST to vet states for future RtL entry
- Start the selection of office space in the new counties and states
- Finalize the recruitment of the Development, Outreach, and Communications Coordinator
- Finalize the agreement with Forcier Consultancy to conduct PEP research
- Contract and train enumerators to conduct the baseline assessments
- Prepare a minimum of one RFA to cover the preparation and provision of core education activities
- Review SSTEP English literacy materials for gender, cultural and conflict-sensitivities, to be used in RtL targeted schools
- Sign contract with Mango Tree to review literacy materials and draft scope and sequence template for Pastoral Education Program (PEP) supplementary literacy materials; create template and conduct Scope and Sequence workshop for populating the template
- Develop instructional materials management trainer's guide
- Submit the PMP and GAP to USAID for approval
- Submit to USAID the RtL planned targets for Fiscal Year 2015 and the subsequent years per the standard and custom indicators
- Conduct a workshop to develop strategies for capacity development of teachers in formal, Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), and CGSs based on identified needs from Girls' Education for South Sudan (GESS) teachers' surveys and other teacher studies. The GESS Teacher Survey report was not available for RtL to review and draw upon for the development of the teacher

professional development strategy. The project will liaise with the Ministry of Education Teacher Education Department and key partners working in this area to vet the RtL in-service strategy.

- Recruit and hire one Emergency Preparedness Officer who will be based in Wau
- Send the Emergency Preparedness Manager to attend Eastern Mennonite University Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR) training in the United States
- Participate in conducting a mapping of existing community-based mechanisms, local NGOs, International NGOs and government offices that could offer child protection and psychosocial support (CP& PSS)
- Finalize recruitment of consultant to carry out development of education in emergencies training manual
- Complete Zain SMS connectivity and cross-network IVR connectivity testing/debugging
- Finalize user data fields; train RtL in-country staff in creation/use of general mailing list template in preparation for community entry
- Provide ongoing system demos with RtL leadership to finalize and implement any User Interface enhancements, and to determine exact use cases for pilot stage
- Provide comprehensive system training with key RtL staff/leadership
- Identify school in Juba to serve as a pilot site and model for RtL activities and seek approval of selection from the MoEST

Planned Activities from Previous Quarter	Actual Status this Quarter	Explanations for Deviations
Develop strategies for using the audio library and Souktel platform utilization in information sharing, capacity development and instructional use based on identified needs for teachers in formal, ALP, PEP and CGS schools.	While RtL team members have had discussions about how to use the Souktel platform, specific strategies have not been developed.	The strategy was going to build on the findings from the GESS teachers' needs assessment. So far the assessment has not been shared with RtL.
Review literacy materials and draft scope and sequence template for PEP supplementary literacy materials.	The contract was not signed.	The contract with Mango Tree will be signed on October 3, 2014.
Draft of literacy assessment and RtL baseline survey tool section on literacy	Different early reading assessment tools and assessment procedures have been collected to inform decision making. The collected tools include EGRA used in Kenya, and Nigeria; UWEZO tools used in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania; the EGRA tool used by SSTEP in 2013; a MOEST/World Bank tool to measure South Sudan ALP learning achievement in 2013; the ACROSS EGRA which is adapted from the Kenya EGRA and customized for South Sudan; and a	USAID recommended close coordination with MoEST and GPE on the type of tool to be used nationally. During the reporting period the MoEST had not provided guidance to RtL on the desired approach or tool.

Planned Activities from Previous Quarter	Actual Status this Quarter	Explanations for Deviations
	<p>tool which was used to establish PEP learners' reading levels early in the implementation of PEP. These tools will be further discussed during the next quarter with an FHI360 literacy specialist and technical advisor who will be here to provide support. The discussion will involve other literacy stakeholders such as GPE, USAID, UNICEF, MOEST, ACROSS and others.</p> <p>ACROSS has submitted a concept paper proposing collaborating to upgrade the modified EGRA tool they used and so it could be used for the RtL literacy baseline assessment.</p>	
Identify, orient and engage National Language (NL) panel leads and writers to participate in a workshop to review and adapt existing SIL and MoEST ALP and formal primary education foundation class's supplementary literacy materials.	Two meetings were conducted with SIL. The scope of work was developed as of the end of this quarter.	The grant agreement will be submitted to Winrock HQ and USAID for approval next quarter
Conduct a workshop to develop strategies for capacity development of teachers in formal, ALP and CGS schools based on identified need from GESS teachers' survey and other teacher studies.	The workshop was not held.	The teacher development specialist with RtL went on leave intending to return to the program, but decided to resign. As the content area of the workshop was his specialty, the activity was put on hold.
Develop plans for training of teachers in PEP/ALP/CGS on developed themes in local languages literacy reading supplementary materials for PI-P4 and SSTEP literacy materials	The plans were not prepared.	This activity is connected to the Mango Tree contract which will be signed early October
Review grade appropriateness, gender, cultural and conflict sensitivities in the MOEST-approved set of English literacy readers and teachers' guides handed over to RtL by	SSTEP material categorization will start in October	Several approaches for the categorization and review of the material had been developed. Two SOWs were developed one with consultants and the other with RtL staff. By end of September,

Planned Activities from Previous Quarter	Actual Status this Quarter	Explanations for Deviations
SSTEP for adoption in RtL target schools (formal, ALP, CGS & PEP) in collaboration with the MoEST Curriculum and English Department.		the decision was to bring RtL county teams to Juba while awaiting community entry to carry out the work.
Review literacy materials and draft scope and sequence template for PEP supplementary literacy materials.	The work was not undertaken.	This activity is connected to the implementation of the Mango Tree contract. Due to the delay in signing the contract, the work was not done.
Develop SOW and engage a consultant to conduct desk review of existing Pastoralist Education Program (PEP) studies and field work (including consultation with pastoralist and other partners) with RtL staff to study the existing MOEST AES PEP, other pastoralist education programs and implementation, and make recommendations to enhance PEP in collaboration with UNESCO and other key partners working in the area of PEP.	The desk review was completed by RtL. The desk review assisted in developing the SOW. Announcement for bids was made. A final bidder was selected	The agreement is expected to be signed early next quarter. The desk review along with the findings of the PEP study will be publicized and shared with partners
Develop DRR plans, including school safety, and integrate them into SDPs	The school-level DRR plans were not developed.	This activity is tied to community entry. Target schools need to be identified first. The DRR plans are school-specific depending on the local hazards and risks identified.
Finalize and submit the PMP to USAID	The majority of the work was completed. The submission is due one month following the full approval of the work plan	The PMP will be finalized and submitted following the approval of the work plan
Develop a roster of teachers, facilitators, care-givers and psychosocial support staff that could be used for emergency response	The rosters have not been developed.	Community entry must precede the development of the roster. This , identification and training have to done first.
Enter roster and other names in Early Warning Alert System and test EWAS	Individuals on the roster and others have not been entered into the EWAS.	Identification and training have to done first before the names are entered into system. Souktel system needs to be activated first.

Planned Activities from Previous Quarter	Actual Status this Quarter	Explanations for Deviations
Train roster members on education in emergencies (EiE)	ToR for training consultant has been finalized and advertisements for consultants was done through Plan system	The consultant will be recruited the next quarter
Attend Eastern Mennonite University Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience Training	The enrolment process was started	The trip was shifted to October based on the schedule for the training

X. FINANCIAL INFORMATION (shared with USAID only)

XI. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

Constraints and Critical Issues

RtL activities were significantly impacted by insecurity during the first year of the project. On December 15, 2013, violence broke out in South Sudan and international staff was evacuated through May 2014. One project vehicle that had been received through the disposition of assets from the BRIDGE project was lost in Unity State in December 2013, though Winrock's claim for insurance was paid.

Overall, the fluid security situation hindered project implementation, and affected long-term planning. Shorter, three-, four- and seven-month work plans were developed per request of USAID. Without a fully approved work plan during the reporting period, all program activities had to be approved.

Vacancies in key and non-key personnel were more difficult to recruit and fill during the evacuation period, the RtL team could not make any assurances about the long-term survival of the project. One staff member, the Teacher Development Specialist, had signed his contract before the conflict began and had been preparing to deploy to South Sudan in early January. His arrival in Juba was delayed five months. A candidate for the position of Emergency Preparedness Manager had been identified, but not hired when the violence began. Fortunately for the project, he was still available when RtL was authorized to have international staff return to South Sudan, and he assumed his position shortly thereafter.

During the first year, the absence of key personnel proved difficult for RtL. The Project Director and the Director of Community Mobilization resigned and had to be re-recruited. The Director of Education named in the proposal was not available by the time the program was awarded, so a replacement was recruited whose candidacy was withdrawn. The original proposed candidate became available during the evacuation and did accept the offer.

The ongoing Ebola crisis in West Africa also challenged RtL. One international staff was unable to return to South Sudan after visiting an Ebola-affected country.

Each of the Juba office's expenses were initially allocated between the original five project implementation states, as they could not be attributed to any specific state. Once the modification was

approved, Winrock designed a new way to handle the allocation of costs across all the active states that lessens the burden on in-country staff and reduces the likelihood of coding errors.

Changes in the Project

The most significant change—expanding the states in which RtL is authorized to work—happened in August (through Modification #2) after many discussions and a budget realignment proposal by Winrock. The specific location where RtL can effectively work in the future will likely have to be determined closer to the date of entry given the volatility of the situation, but the modification affords RtL maximum flexibility, which is enormously helpful.

Programmatically, the Safer Schools Index (SSI) was conceived by Winrock as a community mobilization tool. USAID has asked RtL to create a different type of tool that would provide as objective measures as possible of school safety. Given the environment, RtL recognizes that this type of tool generally cannot be scored or ranked by community members acting on their own. Therefore, RtL will need to have more level of effort devoted to managing the SSI process. In terms of the development of the SSI, RtL has proposed a new way to develop the index after the submission of several different versions of the index. USAID agreed that the baseline data collected when entering the first set of communities RtL teams enters will be used to select the specific indicators comprising the index. However, this revised vision of the SSI leaves a gap in Winrock's community mobilization model, so a new school self-appraisal tool is being designed.

Personnel

Due to conflict, the project office was closed and staff was put on administrative leave from December 18, 2013 through May 6, 2014. Short-term contracts of some local non-essential staff were ended. When RtL resumed activities, local staff had to be re-hired or recruited. When international staff returned to South Sudan, they were temporarily accommodated at AFEX before moving to long-term accommodations in August 2014 that were deemed to be safer than the lodgings people were staying in prior to December.

In August, RtL's Director of Community Mobilization, Robert Schuknecht, joined the project, in time to participate in the County Team orientation in September. The new Project Director, Erik Bentzen, arrived in country in the latter part of September 2014.

An additional department, Security and Operations, was created and Winrock hired Delroy Willis as the Director of Security and Operations. As of the end of the reporting period the Juba office was nearly completely staffed with the exception of the IT Officer, the Administrative Assistant, and the Procurement Assistant, for whom recruitment was underway. All six County Teams initially envisioned were staffed, and hub team staff were also working.,

Cooperative Agreement Modifications and Amendments

There was one modification to the cooperative agreement during the reporting period that expanded the geographic footprint of project implementation activities to all ten states of South Sudan.

Changes and approvals of note during YI include:

- USG Ordered Departure from Juba, South Sudan

- AO approval of the deadline extension for the work plan, PMP, and Gender Action Plan submission
- Executive Order Blocking Property of Certain Persons With Respect to South Sudan
- Approval of staff travel to Washington DC for April workshop
- Remobilization of international staff to South Sudan
- Approval of travel for Matthew Masai to deploy from Kenya to South Sudan
- Approval of travel for Mathew Masai to travel to the US for Trauma Awareness and Resilience Training
- The designation of Jane Namadi as the Agreement Officer's Representative for the RtL project
- Departure of Claudia Koziol and Jason Gilpin from USAID/South Sudan post
- Naming of Alina Schulte, Acting Director, USAID/South Sudan/OAA as Agreement Officer
- Field travel to Wau, Yei and Torit, Magwi, Kapoeta and Terakeka
- Instruction to submit a revised work plan to cover the period ending December 31, 2014
- RtL's Juba office moved from the old BRIDGE project compound to the SSTEP project compound
- Scaled down RtL's Aweil and Kwajok offices as of August 1, 2014
- Two hub offices were established for Greater Bahr el Ghazal (Wau) and Greater Equatorial states (Juba)
- Additional satellite offices were opened in Yei, Magwi, Nimule, and Kapoeta South
- The geographic footprint of RtL activities was expanded from five states to ten states
- RtL selection criteria was revised

Significant asset acquisition/dispositions during the first project year included:

- Four hardtop Toyota Landcruisers and 30 new motorcycles received from the SSTEP project
- One hardtop Toyota Landcruiser received from Deloitte
- Fifty-five new laptops and respective software purchased

XII. Information for ANNUAL Reports Only (shared with USAID only)

- A. *Budget (Spending) Disaggregated by ten states*
- B. *Budget Disaggregated by Earmarks*
- C. *Sub-Awards*
- D. *GPS Information*
- E. *List of Deliverables*
 - *15-month Work Plan October 1, 2014-December 31, 2015*
 - *90-day Work Plan February-April 2014*
 - *120-day Work Plan February-May 2014*
 - *7-month Work Plan June 1, 2014-December 31, 2014, submitted July 10*
 - *7-month Work Plan June 1, 2014-December 31, 2014, submitted August 12*
 - *RtL Conflict Reflection Tool*
 - *RtL Local Level Conflict Management Framework*
 - *Presentation on Safer Schools Index*
 - *SSI County Team Facilitation Guide*

- *Safer Schools Index, version 9/8/14*
- *Safer Schools Index, version 9/8/14 with INEE references*
- *Safer Schools Index, version 9/19/14*
- *Plan for Developing a Safer Schools Index*
- *County Team Orientation Agenda*

F. *Summary of non-USG Funding*

G. *Type of Accounting System Used During Reporting Period*

Annex I: Schedule of Future Events

Date	Location	Activity
October 27–31, 2014	United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC	Eastern Mennonite University STAR (Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience) Training

Annex II: List of Deliverables

The following deliverables are provided as an attachment to this Annual Report:

- 15-month Work Plan October 1, 2014-December 31, 2015
- 90-day Work Plan February-April 2014
- 120-day Work Plan February-May 2014
- 7-month Work Plan June 1, 2014-December 31, 2014, submitted July 10
- 7-month Work Plan June 1, 2014-December 31, 2014, submitted August 12
- RtL Conflict Reflection Tool
- RtL Local Level Conflict Management Framework
- Presentation on Safer Schools Index
- SSI County Team Facilitation Guide
- Safer Schools Index, version 9/8/14
- Safer Schools Index, version 9/8/14 with INEE references
- Safer Schools Index, version 9/19/14
- Plan for Developing a Safer Schools Index
- County Team Orientation Agenda

Annex III: Success Stories

No community entry has been carried out, so there are no stories illustrating the impact of Room to Learn in communities. However, the following stories highlight recent activities supported by RtL that celebrate important messages underpinning RtL: the promotion of girls' education and literacy.

Room to Learn Project Joins National Girls' Education Day Celebrations in South Sudan

In August, the Winrock-implemented Room to Learn (RtL) program joined members of the Ministry of Education Science & Technology, development partners, and school girls to celebrate National Girls' Education Day in Juba, the capital of South Sudan.

As the country struggles to achieve its long-term vision of building an educated and informed nation, the USAID-funded program is expanding its support to South Sudan. Collaborating with the Ministry of Education Science & Technology, and other partners, RtL will use a community-based approach to reach out-of-school children and youth. The program emphasizes literacy, gender equity and conflict-mitigation, and aims to enrol out-of-school children in school, improving the educational experience and offering distance-learning channels such as radio instruction and mobile phone audio libraries in hard-to-reach areas.

This year's celebration emphasized enhancing behavioral change, with a particular focus on girls' education. While addressing the gathering, Hon. Manase Lomole Waya, deputy governor of Central Equatoria State, stressed the importance of girls' education, as well as preventing gender-based violence and non-inclusive cultural practices that hinder girls' education. The deputy governor also emphasized the need to enforce community by-laws if girls are to be protected from cultural biases that restrict their ability to learn.

Room to Learn donated 20 school bags, along with text books, to the girls for excelling in the South Sudan Primary School Leaving Examination.

Manuela Guwo Aresto, a 14-year-old beneficiary, said the program inspires girls to study. "I am very excited as the books will help me improve my reading and I will use the bag to carry all my books. Rain will never destroy my books again," she said. "I encourage my siblings and other girls like me to enjoy education and become better women in the future."



Manuela Guwo Aresto, a 14-year-old recipient of Room to Learn's initiative to provide girls with school bags and text books.

Room to Learn Celebrates World Literacy Day

On September 18, 2014, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) brought together partners and government institutions to celebrate World Literacy Day, including youth and adult students of Alternative Education Systems' (AES) literacy programs.

The theme of the event was "Literacy and Sustainable Development." Director General of AES, Kuol Atem Bol, welcomed participants with a speech highlighting literacy as the foundation of education and the first step toward improving lives. MOEST's Undersecretary, Hon. Michael Lopuke, illustrated this idea with stories of the many ways reading and writing has improved the quality of life for families in South Sudan. He noted, "mothers who know how to read and write are able to follow doctor's instructions and administer medicines as prescribed. Mothers who could not read are at a greater risk of improperly administering drugs, which could lead to the death of children." He went on to say that high illiteracy rates causes instability in many South Sudanese families. It is a cause for unemployment and potential catalyst for conflicts.

Rebecca Wang, Hon. Advisor to the Ministry of Health, was in attendance for the festivities. She addressed the group with a message emphasizing the relationship between literacy and health; saying, "Illiteracy is the father of all diseases in South Sudan. It factors into early pregnancy among girls, the inability to seek medical attention, and poor childcare in communities."

In an effort to combat illiteracy, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has collaborated with Room to Learn to deliver educational services through a community-based approach. One goal of this program is to increase reading levels among school children and youth particularly among marginalized populations, such as girls and youth in cattle camps. This will be accomplished through scholarships and remote-learning through radio instruction for hard-to-reach communities. Increased access to education will improve literacy, gender equity, and aid conflict-mitigation. In honor of the World Literacy Day celebration, Room to Learn donated an assortment of reading materials for candidates who demonstrated extraordinary achievements in the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP).

The Deputy Minister of MOEST applauded AES for reaching out to citizens who wouldn't have been able to access education. In closing, he remarked that "Education has brought together generations of leaders since the beginning of time, and education can build a nation".

Annex IV: Community Schools Approaches in South Sudan

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS APPROACHES IN SOUTH SUDAN COMPLEMENTARY MODELS AND APPROACHES Technical Working Group-Zero Draft

I. BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Education Science and Technology has developed the General Education Strategic Plan, 2012-2017 which is a reference document for stakeholders in the Education Sector with the aim of improving and increasing access to quality and equitable general education for all. The 2012 Education Act and the General Education Strategic Plan 2012-2017 - underpinned by the Child Act of 2008 - pave the way for universal access to quality education for all South Sudanese children.

While the national education system in South Sudan has demonstrated commitment to provide education for all as articulated in the GESP (2012-2017), the reality is that over 58% of school going age children are out of school majority of which are girls and those in underserved, difficult to reach populations.

In least developed parts of the world the poorest people, residents of remote areas, and the most disadvantaged populations—for example, girls and members of ethnic and religious minorities—are those either denied access to schooling or provided with the lowest quality schools by state-funded education systems. It is exactly these people and regions that need to be reached if Education for all (EFA) goals are going to be met.

II. COMMUNITY SCHOOL APPROACHES

Complementary models and approaches, such as the community school approach have demonstrated how to meet the challenge of reaching underserved people and places of the world²:

- A well-known complementary model, BRAC in Bangladesh, has graduated 2.5 million children from its rural schools over the past 18 years. A recent evaluation of the quality of education in Bangladesh found that pupil performance in complementary schools—with BRAC as the dominant provider—was consistently superior to government and private schools, in both rural and urban settings (Chowdhury 2001).
- More than 2,000 community schools in Zambia, many of which target HIV/AIDS orphans, now serve 25,000 children.
- Egypt's community schools, started in 1992 in just four villages in Assiut, have spread to more than 1,000 and serve some 25,000 children.
- Community-organized schools in northern Pakistan now reach 53,000 girls in approximately 2,200 communities. They employ 3,000 young women as teachers.

² Reaching the Underserved: Complementary Models of Effective Schooling-2007

III. LEARNING FROM COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES

While comprehensive research and comparative analysis of alternative projects, programs, and approaches to providing education are only just beginning, it is already clear that several factors are consistently present in successful complementary approaches. These include:

- **Vision and leadership:** Successful programs start with a vision of providing quality and relevant educational opportunity for specific underserved groups—the rural poor, ethnic minorities, girls, urban street children, or orphans—at a cost equivalent to or less than public schools.
- **Local leadership:** this plays a critical role in introducing community school programs. To implement a successful community school programme, local leadership must be deeply committed to children's learning, and willing to organize political support and resources.
- **Local design and sensitivity:** Successful community school programs grow from the culture and the people they serve. The programs are usually developed, organized, and managed with impoverished, small, and isolated communities without easy access to public schools, and they depend on effective, enduring partnerships between local organizations, communities, government, and development agencies.
- **Innovative and effective management partnerships:** Successful management relies on innovative partnerships. These can be formal agreements or professional collaborations between NGOs, communities, government, and development agencies. Sustained quality education also depends on combinations of actors who reflect the local context and build or reinforce needed social capital and infrastructure.
- **Clear definition of roles:** for community school programs to succeed, the program's management framework should be aligned with the national education framework and regulations. Defining roles, responsibilities, and resources requires engagement between public authorities and organizations establishing community schools. All parties need to come to an understanding about the roles, responsibilities, and resources each can provide. In the context of South Sudan, the guiding framework is that of Alternative Education systems (AES).
- **Starting small:** Successful community schools start with a few committed communities, then often expand to similar nearby communities. The most important resources for this expansion are people who, through field experience, have become local experts, a human resource that must be continually developed. Subsequently community schools that start small should be able to transition to formal public schools.
- **Managing for quality:** In successful community school programs, supervisors and managers are viewed as support staff who are discovering how to enhance teachers' roles and advance children's learning. The radical concept of the organization serving the teacher and learner turns the notion of hierarchical power on its head. Management in support of children's learning is at the heart of effectiveness and quality, along with commitment to a continual process of organizational learning.
- **Location and Size of Schools:** Governments tend to locate primary schools in areas that can draw from several villages to realize an enrollment of hundreds of children. The lesson from complementary models in other countries that have used the community schooling approach, such as Egypt, Bangladesh, Zambia, and Pakistan is that distance to school is a significant barrier to access, especially for girls. World Bank research reveals that enrollment declines considerably when the distance to school exceeds one kilometer. For example, in the mid-1990s, female enrollment in Upper Egypt's rural hamlets was estimated at 15 percent. Families complained that the distance to the nearest school was too great for their daughters. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) responded by designing a community school project to target small hamlets with at least 50 out-of-school children. Each community school enrolled a multi-age student cohort and limited class size to 30 students.

Female facilitators tailored learning activities to the different levels and ages of the group and created a safe environment for girls to attend. The result was a successful project.

IV. THE CONTEXT OF SOUTH SUDAN

BRAC in partnership with the Alternative Education Systems directorate of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology started the community schooling approach in Juba county of South Sudan in the year 2008, focusing on community girls' schools. This approach is characterized by the following attributes:

- The approach targets children of ages 8 to 11 years, as an entry scheme limited to the lower classes of P1 to P4. After P4, the learners are able to join formal schooling.
- Typically a classroom is made up of 30-50 children, and where more learners exist, more classrooms are established.
- At the start of the project, BRAC used the approach of renting space, paying the property owners 75-80 US dollars per month. However, this approach has been found to be unsustainable especially in rural settings where there are no rentable spaces.
- Currently BRAC is working with the communities to build learning spaces. BRAC provides some materials that cannot be sourced locally, such as the Roofing sheets and the community provides labour and locally available materials, plus the land to build the school.
- The community schools are established within an existing community, since it was noted that one of the hindrances for girls to go to school were the long walking distances, especially for girls in lower primary classes
- The teachers in these schools come from the same communities where the schools are established
- The schooling is focused on accelerated learning following community girls' school curriculum, where a 4 year's curriculum is completed in 3 years.
- The schooling uses an alternative curriculum developed/provided by AES department of MoEST
- The teachers are trained at the community level in this alternative curriculum.
- The Community schools are often an initiative of the communities and therefore are started by the communities with the support of local leaders in some instances
- The communities (not the government) take the lead in the delivery of schooling
- The communities provide and own the land on which the community school is established.
- The schools are owned by the communities
- While the teachers' salaries are meant to be paid by the communities, in reality it has proved difficult and thus requires the support from government, development partners and other sector players.
- The communities establish strong PTAs to manage the school.
- Experience has shown that most community schools start small (e.g with one classroom), and later transform into formal schools.

V. SITE PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Identification of Site Scope and elements: before selecting the site, a sketch needs to be drawn indicating the facilities that will be accommodated on the site. These facilities shall include classrooms, a playground, segregated latrines (separate latrines for boys, girls and teachers) and a source of clean water. The sketch also needs to indicate the area required for the site. This area can be calculated after indicating the number and size of facilities and the playground. The sketch must be validated by community leaders and the site must be large enough to cater for all the required facilities, and providing space for possible future expansion of the school facilities.

Site Options: Optional sites must be visited and their characteristics should be analyzed and compared. A group of key stakeholders (community leaders, teachers, children, representative from the state ministry of education, etc.) must participate in the site selection to enable a thorough understanding of the context and make a more sound selection.

Site Location: The site must be close to where the community lives, so that children, girls in particular, are safe on their way to and from schools. Adequate distance should be provided between the site and bases for military installations (e.g Barracks) to avoid potential for cross fire. If possible, the site should be at a close distance to safe natural water supplies, such as natural springs or availability of water tables at reasonable depth to drill ground wells (boreholes).

Site Profile: In general, it is advisable to avoid steep slopes, as they typically have the following increased risks: landslides, land erosion, rock fall, and problems with accessibility especially for the smaller age group children as well as children with physical disabilities. Where there are no alternative suitable sites, extensive site leveling and retaining walls, external drainage and ramped access ways must be provided. Community school sites wherever possible should be above the known floodplain for the area, and the terrain should preferably be flat or gently sloping.

Flood Prone Areas: Areas with risk of flooding, low lying sites or sites close to rivers must be avoided wherever possible. If this is not feasible, the design and layout of the community school must take future and seasonal flooding into consideration, by raising the building off the ground, through raised plinths.

Site Hazards: The site must be free of land mines, unexploded ordnance, livestock, broken glass, stagnant waste or fecal matter. The site must be safe from natural disasters (floods, landslides, bush fires, etc.). The community must be consulted to confirm areas where natural disasters occur.

Orientation of the community school: To obtain thermal comfort, shape and orientation of community school should be considered. The longest facades with window openings should face north or south in order to minimize the impact of the sun rays and reduce temperatures inside the community school.

Preservation of Natural Features on Site: Large trees on the site should not be removed, as they provide shade, wind protection and points of interest around and between the community school structures. Neighboring landforms, structures, or vegetation for cool wind protection and summer shading should be used.

VI. CONSTRUCTION

Construction Materials: The choice and availability of construction materials is one of the key factors that determine the design of the community school. Whenever possible, materials should be locally sourced to reduce cost, delivery times and support the local or host community's economy.

In the context of South Sudan, local materials and local construction techniques should be employed to reduce costs, and enable community participation in the construction and maintenance of the facilities. However, this shall depend on a functioning local construction material market and availability of skilled labourers.

Sustainability: It is noteworthy that almost all types of construction activities are very energy intensive and contribute to the depletion of natural resources, e.g deforestation, water usage and pollution. Therefore, it is advisable that implementing partners for community schools conduct an assessment of potential construction materials in regard to their impact on the local environment and to avoid adding to the existing environmental concerns, increasing the vulnerabilities of the resident populations.

School Building Types:

The following attributes define the minimum standards that should be followed by communities and implementing partners when implementing community school projects;

- **Size:** All classrooms irrespective of materials used should be of minimum size 6m x 8m
- **Number of Classrooms:** For purposes of establishing a community school, there should be at least one classroom, and preferably four classrooms to provide for the target entry level for community schooling of P1 to P4.
- **Permanent structures;** where funds are available, durable materials (those materials with a life-span of at least 10 years), such as reinforced concrete, steel structures, cement blocks, burnt clay bricks, corrugated iron roof sheets, etc, should be used.
- **Semi-permanent structures;** where the community can provide some locally sourced materials and other partners can provide imported materials such as roofing sheets, semi-permanent facilities should be established. Such facilities would typically be built using materials such as bamboo or mud and wattle for the walls, and roofing sheets for the roofs.
- **Permanent Foundation and semi-permanent superstructure;** this would constitute a permanent foundation type, complete with a concrete flooring. However, owing to the limitations in funding, the superstructure can be built using semi-permanent materials, or completed as a shell with a roof and its supporting structure. Such a structure would allow for future adjustments to make the building all permanent, building on the existing permanent foundation.
- **Tents;** these can be used to urgently address an identified need, and allow the community to provide additional community school facilities while the learning happens in the tents.

Annex V: Physical Improvements to Schools

TWG: Physical Improvement to Schools

1st Meeting: 11th July 2014

Topic: Using the Community School Approach in the context of South Sudan

Attendance:

Sno.	Names	Organisation/ Ministry	Contacts
01	George Ali Steven (Chair)	MOEST	geoalius@gmail.com
02	Akuja De Garang	GESS	0955235527. Akuja.degarang@gess-southsudan.org
03	Angelo Machar	MOEST	0912106747. gokmachardit@gmail.com
04	Md.Kamrul Hasan	BRAC	0922922541. Hasan.kamrul@brac.net
05	Oryem Charles Wani	MOEST	0955161840. oryemwani@gmail.com
06	Khan Mohammad Ferdous	BRAC	0922922090. Ferdous.km@brac.net
07	William Nyamutale	UNICEF	0955 314 930. wnyamutale@unicef.org
08	Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo	UNESCO	c.medel-anonuevo@unesco.org
09	Sahar A AL-Rufai	Room To Learn	0912 483 356. salrufai@winrok.org
10	LeAnna Marr	USAID	lmarr@usaid.gov
11	Daniel Wani (not present)	USAID	dwani@usaid.gov

Agenda:

- Brief Introduction of the topic from the Chair
- Discussing the ToR for this TWG
- Defining a community School
- Proposing a Way forward
- AoB

Brief Introduction of the topic from the Chair

The technical working group chair made a brief introduction of the topic, explaining that as a follow up to the GESS technical committee meeting of 08th July, 2014, it has become apparent that while many partners and players in the education sector in South Sudan are involved in complementary approaches for the delivery of education in south sudan, using what is termed as 'community schooling', there seems to be no uniform approach embraced by all stakeholders. Hence this Technical working group was established to discuss the topic and give guidance on a way forward.

Discussing the ToR for this TWG

The group briefly discussed what would constitute the Terms of Reference for this TWG. Following the brief deliberation, it was agreed that what was important was first to define what 'community schools' are, and thereafter be able to discuss a way forward after a clear understanding of the topic.

Defining a community school

The BRAC representative was requested to give a brief description of the community schooling approach in the context of South Sudan and he explained that the approach being used by BRAC in South Sudan constitutes the following:

- That BRAC started the community schooling approach in Juba county of South Sudan in the year 2008, focusing on community girls' schools.
- Currently community schooling is benefiting 60% girls and 40% boys, targeting children of 8 to 11 years, as an entry scheme limited to the lower classes of P1 to P4. After P4, the learners are able to join formal schooling.
- Typically a classroom is made up of 30-50 children, and where more learners exist, more classrooms are established.
- At the start of the project, BRAC used the approach of renting space, paying the property owners 75-80 US dollars per month.
- Currently BRAC is working with the communities to build learning spaces. BRAC provides some materials that cannot be sourced locally, such as the Roofing sheets and the community provides labour and locally available materials, plus the land to build the school.
- The community schools are established within an existing community, since it was noted that one of the hindrances for girls to go to school were the long walking distances, especially for girls in lower primary classes
- The teachers in these schools come from the same communities where the schools are established
- The schooling is focused on accelerated learning following community girls' school curriculum, where a 4 year's curriculum is completed in 3 years.
- The schooling uses an alternative curriculum developed/provided by AES department of MoEST
- The teachers are trained at the community level in this alternative curriculum.

Members further discussed this definition and more attributes of community schools were added as follows;

- Community schools are often an initiative of the communities and therefore are started by the communities with the support of local leaders in some instances
- The communities (not the government) take the lead in the delivery of schooling
- The communities provide and own the land on which the community school is established.
- The schools are owned by the communities
- While the teachers' salaries are meant to be paid by the communities, in reality it has proved difficult and thus requires the support from government, development partners and other sector players.
- The communities establish strong PTAs to manage the school.
- Experience has shown that most community schools start small (e.g with one classroom), and later transform into formal schools.

Proposing a Way forward

The group resolved that since BRAC and UNICEF have already initiated activities towards community schooling, the two entities should meet on Tuesday, 15th July, 2014, so as to develop zero draft guidance notes on community schooling, including construction options for South Sudan.

AOB: There was no AOB to discuss.